

Whisker's Lesson



May Greenwood

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By

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“God is Love”

A Story Written from Facts

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—by—

MAY GREENWOOD

*Lovingly dedicated to my
little cousins*

"SUNNY SUZETTE"

and

"MANLY MONROE"



"WHISKER COAXING MERRIE"

(See page 11)

Whisker's Lesson

CHAPTER I.

WHISKER, wont you please stop chattering? I think it is very unpleasant for you to make such a noise when I want to read."

Merrie looked straight up in the tree at the tiny creature that, with a strong chest and straight back, was sitting on his hind legs and speaking his little piece as though he meant to be heard.

When Merrie spoke to him, he looked very earnestly at her out of his little round eyes, and whisked his tail about in a way that seemed to say:

"Now you know I am willing to have *you* come under my tree, but who are all these others who come so often where they are not wanted?"

"I decidedly object—do you hear?" an impatient jerk of the saucy tail. "I object to so much company and I am going to scold until they go away."

I am sure you know by this time "Whisker" was a little red squirrel, just a scrap of a fellow, with a tail so large and bushy he could cover himself all over with it.

It seemed very funny to Merrie that such a tiny creature should feel so important, and think he owned this tree which was the largest one Merrie had ever seen.

It was a great spreading butternut tree, and Whisker, without his bushy tail and fur coat, would have been hardly larger than one of the butternuts.

Merrie and her mother were spending some

weeks in the country with Mr. and Mrs. Preiss, who lived in a large, beautiful house which had a piazza, and a square porch over the front door.

The house stood ever so far back on a green lawn, which was smooth as velvet, and just to one side of the porch stood the grand old butternut tree with its outstretched arms loaded with nuts.

Just think of a tree so large that twenty or more boys and girls could play under it at the same time, and then imagine small Whisker sitting up there on one of the branches, thinking the whole place his, and willing only to be generous with Merrie—because he liked her—and that was not really being generous at all.

Merrie looked at him with a very sober face, and opening her book again said firmly: "Well Whisker, if you would be cunning and good as you are sometimes, I'd love to talk

with you; but when you scold I simply *won't hear you*; it's foolish and wrong to scold."

No one noticed the rebellious little creature further, and when he found it was of no use; they did not, and would not pay the slightest attention to him, and could not be driven away, he jumped to the branch of a neighboring tree and whisked off, taking all the unpleasantness with him.

Whisker was in reality a very lovable little fellow, but there was one sad fault, he seemed very selfish; however, I think it was because he really did not know just what was right, and I am sure he never took time to be quiet and think it out.

He was always racing up and down and round and round, swinging himself from one tree to another, and so going long distances through the trees where they stood near together.

He was a wild reckless sort of a chap, because there was no one to tell him what he must or must not do—he had his own way all the time.

You see he had no one to think about or take care of but himself, and I suppose that was how he came to be selfish; though, while we want to excuse him all that is possible, we know he did not *have* to be that way, it was just a wrong habit he had formed.

I suspect none of us are entirely free from “selfishness,” but animals, children and people have lessons to learn, and all have the same teacher, and that is “Love.”

Little Merrie—people called her that because she was always bright and joyous—thought Love had been very, very good to her and her mother, in bringing them from the heat and noise of the city to this dear, fresh, country place, and she was bubbling over with childish joy in everything.

And that is just what Love wants. He wants us to be so happy that every day and all the time our faces will shine and our voices fairly ring with gladness.

Merrie played a great deal under the shady branches of the butternut tree, and Whisker played right among them, thus they were very near neighbors, and it was astonishing what a lot of conversation they had together.

Merrie was a little chatter-box, but her furry friend, Whisker, had so many ways of talking, she had to watch him closely, lest she should interrupt, or lose some of his little squirrel talk.

When he scolded, which I am glad to say was not often, his voice was very loud and unpleasant, while at other times Merrie found him a charming little playmate.

He knew pretty well when his chum had an apple that he was going to have a good

large piece—and cookies and crullers, my! he could smell those at almost any distance, and would come scampering down to the ground and sit up as straight as a drum-major in front of Merrie, and coax.

He would snap his eyes, and twitch his little nose, and all the time keep his little head bobbing faster than Merrie could look, while the eager flourishes of his bushy tail seemed to say: "I want a piece! I want a piece! I want a piece—quick!"

The little girl liked his cunning, coaxing ways; but when he laughed at her and showed four tiny white teeth, she could not wait a moment longer, and tossed him his part of the treat.

One day this little red-coated fellow had taken a trip away some distance; jumping from tree to tree, so happy and free.

By and by when he turned to go home, he thought it would be pleasant for a change,

to go back on the fences and through the cool green grass.

Now some boys saw Whisker hopping along and thought it would be great fun to chase him.

They ran very fast but could not catch him, and so began to throw stones at Merrie's happy, frisking little friend.

I am sure you and I cannot imagine how one can like to hurt or frighten anything, especially anything that is small or helpless.

Think of a boy who would weigh perhaps one hundred pounds, chasing and hurting a little squirrel not much bigger, without his coat, than a butternut!

The stones hit him some times and it took a great deal of courage to keep on, but he thought of Merrie and his cozy home in the butternut tree and said stoutly to himself: "No, indeed, I'll not give up to my enemies!"

Dear little fellow! he needed to run his very best—"like lightning"—as Merrie thought he did sometimes, but fear told him he could not run as fast as usual.

Just as he was turning into his home lawn, a large stone struck him and he could go no further.

Merrie saw the boys and sprang to her feet in dismay; she ran to see what was the matter and a great lump came in her throat when she saw the dear little squirrel laid out so flat—his bright eyes shut—and the nose and tail that had been always on the move—all still.

The child stood very quiet a moment trying to think what to do; she wanted to run and call her mother, but the boys in the road might throw more stones.

Suddenly the tears dried, and everything looked even more bright and beautiful than before Whisker came.

Then she knew Love was there, and that not one sad, sick or sorry thing can stay where Love is.

Love, who always tells the truth, breathed these things to her, and looking out into the road she saw the boys had gone, then she looked at Whisker; the blood had stopped flowing, he was slowly humping up his back, his tail was beginning to stand up, and he looked almost ready to speak to her.

Merrie was so happy and grateful she ran into the house and shouted to her mother, then darted out; there was no furry red-coat to be seen, but a few moments later Whisker was scampering through the branches, thankful indeed to be home again, and more thankful to Love for taking care of him.

Perhaps you think a little squirrel couldn't know about Love—but bless your hearts! animals wouldn't know anything but Love, if

people were always good to them, and to one another.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. Preiss, sitting under the tree one day in September, said to her husband: "I think you ought to gather the butternuts soon, you like them so much in the winter, and they are good in cake and butternut molasses candy."

"Oh, there's no hurry," said Mr. Preiss comfortably; "they needn't be gathered for a month yet—most of them will fall when we have frost."

"I should think nothing but a monkey could gather the nuts from this great tree," cried Merrie, looking up into the wilderness of branches and leaves.

"Perhaps you can persuade your little 'Whisker' friend to give us some help," suggested Mrs. Preiss.

"Oh, yes, he could!" laughed Merrie, clapping her hands in high glee; "I saw him today carrying a nut, and he did it just as *easy*; but he did look funny—just as if he were going away on a visit and carrying his trunk in his mouth."

Now the secret of Whisker's fretfulness these days was the fact that he overheard them talking and feared they were going to interfere with his plans for the winter.

"Surely," he said, "this is my tree; I live alone in it, and of course the nuts are mine."

Swinging on a branch he confessed to Merrie that he meant to gather them all for himself.

But this was one of the times Merrie did not happen to be watching or listening to his funny language, and so did not know of his deep-laid plans.

Soon the air grew so cold Merrie did not

play under the tree, and so she did not see that Whisker had begun in earnest to harvest his winter store.

Love breathed in his ear: "You do not need all these nuts, you cannot use so many."

"Oh, well, it's fine to have a good pile even if I can't use them all," replied Whisker, cheerfully.

"Yes," said Love, "but isn't that selfish? You know there are some squirrels that haven't any nut tree; besides, Mr. Preiss wishes to put some in the barn."

"Che-Koo, Che-Koo," laughed Whisker, "he always wants them, but never gets them because they are beyond his reach!"

So saying, he gave that funny tail such a flurry of twitches that it might have come off.

"Don't you think it would be kind," said Love, "to throw part of them on the ground

and then Merrie can pick them up for Mr. Preiss?"

"What! Do you think I am a fool?"

"Do you think when I have a chance to get a big pile like this I will give half of them away?" chattered Whisker in a sharp angry tone; *snapping* his tail and *twitching* his nose and *bobbing* his head all at once.

But Love had gone and Whisker had the nuts all to himself.

* * * *

How he worked nights and days; and somehow no one noticed how very busy he was.

It is plain to see, is it not? that our little furry friend was greedy as well as selfish.

I am sure had he listened to Love, wise Love would have told him a safe place in which to store his breakfasts, dinners and suppers for the coming winter.

But he was in such a hurry to get it done, he did not wait for Love to show him the best and right way, and what do you think happened?

Well, we shall see!

* * * *

Around the great square porch ran the deep rain trough; when it rained the water ran off the roof into this trough, and flowed from there into a cistern or a very large barrel, where it was kept clean for use.

Mrs. Preiss' front room had a bow-window, but the sun shone in so brightly one of the shades was always kept lowered, the one toward the porch.

One day she happened to raise this shade, and behold! the woman fairly gasped with astonishment.

"Well, I never!" she exclaimed, "if that doesn't beat anything I ever saw!"

She went quickly to the bow-window on

the other side of the porch—it was a room not in use now, the summer visitors having gone.

Looking out she saw something just like what she had seen from her window.

“That little robber, Whisker!” she exclaimed; “is it possible he has done all that? and we haven’t known anything about it!”

Mrs. Preiss called her husband with Merrie and her mother, and what do you think Merrie saw?

The deep rain-trough that ran round the porch, a distance of about twenty feet, was so completely filled with butternuts you could not have piled on another.

Then one of the neatest pieces of work anyone ever saw, Whisker had laid them in rows along the sloping roof of the porch, in the most perfect order. A man laying bricks to make a house could not have done it more evenly and perfectly than dear, busy little

Whisker had laid his butternut floor.

Merrie's eyes were big and round with excitement and delight. "Oh, mother," she cried, "isn't it perfectly beautiful! and to think a cunning little speck of a squirrel could do all that—and it is just as *orderly*!"

"Don't you see," said mother, laughing and patting her cheek, "Whisker knows without being told, something I am trying to teach my little girl."

"What is that?" asked Merrie looking wonderingly at her.

"Why, he knows if he is orderly and puts each thing in its proper place, he has a great deal more room, and things are more easily found; then see how much nicer it looks than if they were all tumbled on carelessly."

Sudden roses jumped into Merrie's cheeks and with a sorry look she ducked her head under her mother's arm.

But mother's arm held her close and lov-

ingly while Love breathed: "Darling little Merrie girl, I know you will learn a lesson from the squirrel, and remember to be more neat and careful every day," and Merrie's heart said: "Yes, indeed, I will! I thought it was hard to put each thing in exactly its right place, but surely a little girl can do as much, and more, than a tiny red squirrel."

And the lesson was learned; mother seldom after that had to reprove her little girl for being careless or disorderly.

* * * *

"Solomon Levi!" shouted Mr. Preiss; "there isn't a nut left! that young rogue has stripped the whole tree! hasn't left one for the rest of us!"

"Before I'd be outdone by a red squirrel," said Mrs. Preiss, looking severely at her rather easy-going husband.

"I must say he's a good worker; it beats me what he thinks he's going to do with such

a lot, he can't eat quarter of them," replied Mr. Preiss, good-naturedly.

"It's just like some folks," declared his wife, thinking of some of her neighbors, "they keep getting more and more money, when they can't use what they already have. I don't think it's right!"

"Keep cool now! Keep cool!" drawled the man; "to be sure you don't have to sit up nights to count your money; neither will you starve—even if Whisker has taken all the nuts.

"I suppose he thinks they belong to him, since he has worked so hard, but he shouldn't have filled the rain-trough with them."

"I don't know," said Merrie, with a troubled little pucker between her eyes, "of course I think it is very cunning and smart in him, but it doesn't—seem—*quite* right for him to take them—*all*."

"Pretty greedy and selfish I call it," said

Mr. Preiss, secretly amused.

Merrie could not endure to hear her little friend blamed, and she began to look unhappy.

"I am sure," said mother kindly, "Whisker did not know he was being selfish and greedy; you cannot expect a little squirrel to always know what is right; why, even boys and girls and grown people do not always do right—even when they know; but we have to be very kind and forgiving, do we not, my little girlie?"

Mr. and Mrs. Preiss went off down stairs and Merrie snuggled lovingly up to her mother and said thoughtfully, "Mother, do you think there would be any selfish squirrels if there weren't any selfish people?"

"No, my darling," said mother.

The child sat very quiet on her mother's lap for a few moments, looking at the tree from which every nut had been taken; sud-

denly, giving her mother a kiss, she jumped down as though all the troublesome questions in her active little mind had been answered, and said happily: "Mother dear, we know Love takes care of everything, don't we? And we don't have to know *all about* things; it is just to be good now and trust Love to do the rest.

"Doesn't that sound *easy*, mother?"

"It does darling," said mother, with a wistful look in her gentle face.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day Mr. Preiss said: "I must get a ladder and take those nuts down.

"Oh!" cried Merrie in dismay, "are you going to take the nuts away from Whisker after he has worked so hard, and packed them away so carefully?"

"Please, *please* don't, Mr. Preiss!"

"He'll have to take them down Merrie," said Mrs. Preiss, "because they stop up the rain-trough, and will spoil the water in the cistern."

The child longed to say more but kept still, while her heart thumped so she could hear it.

The man put a ladder up to the side of the porch; he took a basket and filled it, then

another, and soon all the nuts were gathered and filled five large fruit baskets.

Everyone came out of the house, and some of the neighbor's children came to watch the easy undoing of hapless little Whisker's days and nights of patient, careful work.

Merrie saw tears in her mother's eyes and indeed every one was very quiet, and it all felt sorry to the little girl.

When the man gathered a handful of nuts in his big, strong hand, Merrie thought how many, many times the hopeful, happy little creature had gone to and fro to put them there.

"But," she thought, brightening, "we will leave them around somewhere, and he will be so glad to see them, and put them in another place—I guess he won't mind the extra work."

Mr. Preiss said: "Guess how many nuts in these baskets?"

They all guessed, and on counting, found some over three hundred in each of the five baskets.

Just think of that!

More than fifteen hundred trips had been made, and on each journey he had carried his "trunk in his mouth."

"Where shall we put them so Whisker can find them, Mr. Preiss?" asked Merrie, looking around for a good place.

"Find them? ha, ha!" roared the man.

"Solomon Levi! What do you take me for? Why, I'm going to put them in the *barn* to dry, and if you stay here long enough, my young lady, we'll give you some butternut-molasses-candy," and he smacked his lips and looked just as though he had a big, juicy piece in his mouth that moment.

The child's little figure grew stiff and still; she looked at the man as though unable to believe he could do so dreadful a thing, while

the thought of Whisker's disappointment rushed over her so she could only swallow and swallow.

Dear little Merrie; just now when she most needed to remember, she quite forgot about Love, how He takes care of everything and does not allow His little children—or even squirrels—to lose anything that *really* is theirs.

"But you haven't any *right* to hide them away from Whisker," she exclaimed earnestly; "it is just like stealing—and *he* will think you have stolen from him; you don't want even a squirrel to think *that*, do you, Mr. Preiss?"

"Please leave just *one* basket here for him?" pleaded Merrie pitifully, turning to Mrs. Preiss.

"No, I guess we'll have to put them in the barn," she said, "he can get some more—somewhere."

Merrie knew the time for gathering nuts was over, and there was an awful aching feeling seemed to fill her full, as she ran and ducked her head under her mother's arm to hide the tears this great ache squeezed out.

* * * *

Mr. Preiss and the boys carried the heavy baskets to the barn and spread the nuts on the floor of a room up stairs; this barn was not often used and was kept locked, so they knew the nuts would be safe.

But somehow the man did not feel quite happy, because he had allowed himself to be selfish, and selfishness makes any one feel small and mean, and takes away true courage.

Love had breathed to him:

"Think what a great, strong man you are, and how many good things you have to eat; do you think it is right to take away everything that tiny creature has laid by for his winter food?"

Then Love said: "Think of all the work he has done—doesn't he deserve to have something for that?"

But Mr. Preiss would not listen to Love and so all the nuts were locked carefully away from Whisker.

That night Merrie awoke suddenly; she had been having a troubled dream, and now it all came back to her. "Oh, dear! how cruel Whisker must think we are," she thought tremblingly. "I shall feel ashamed ever to look him in the face again."

Suddenly she remembered *Love* was with her, and it made such a difference! the ache had gone and she was happy; and lying there in the darkness, she knew that Love would take care of everything, and that He would not forsake a frisking, happy little squirrel, that had not anyone but Love to look

out for him, and tucking her little hand cosily under her rosy cheek, the sweet trusting child fell asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

NOW what do you think Whisker was doing all this time?

Merrie had wondered he did not chatter when they carried off his nuts, and had said fearfully to herself: "His heart is broken and that is why he is so still."

Not a bit of it!

Whisker, sitting on a neighboring tree, saw what they were all about, and was so shocked and angry he humped up, and puffed out his sides until his coat was near to bursting off the buttons, it became so tight.

He lashed his tail, and twitched his nose, and bobbed his head all at once, in such a fury of excitement and rage, it was a mercy he did not drop all to pieces on the spot; and what made it worse, he tried to scold and could not make a sound.

There sat the angry squirrel, dumb, while the robbers carried off his property. It seemed too bad to be true, and he rubbed his eyes and pinched his ears hard and thought, "Oh, what shall I do? what shall I do?" and Love, feeling He was needed, came and stood protectingly by him.

Presently Love breathed, "You remember I advised you not to take all those nuts; you must learn to think of others as well as yourself; however, you did your work faithfully and well, and," He said, touching the lone little squirrel with His soothing hand, "I will see that you have all you *need*. Do not be afraid or angry, Love is taking care of you."

The anger had to go, it was so ashamed before Love, and soon everything looked bright and hopeful to Whisker.

He heard Merrie speaking up for him and his little squirrel heart skipped all about in the small space given to it.

"I can trust Merrie," he thought, because she has Love with her all the time, and that makes her honest and true to her friends."

The angry twitchings were turned to joyous flourishes, and while Merrie was thinking him broken-hearted, he was dancing a jig and having the jolliest of times—for who can be down-hearted when he knows Love is with him?

Sometimes he lifted one little toe and gave his coat a little scratch, and then went off into fits of laughter that almost pitched him to the ground, but Love did not let him make a sound.

When they carried the baskets away he ran out on the farthest branch and by stretching his neck, could just see where they went—around the corner into the barn.

Just then his voice came back and he chuckled softly:

"Che-koo, Che-koo, Che-koo,
I could laugh myself in two;
Perhaps you think you can make me cry,
I know I'm little, but I'm just Oh! my!"
And off he whisked for a circus through the
trees.

* * * *

The next day Merrie was quite happy because, as we know, Love had told her that everything was all right.

In the afternoon she was sitting in the warm sun on the porch when to her surprise and delight a merry little figure came flitting around the corner and hopped up one step and then another; he stood straight up on his hind legs and popping his head on one side, looked at her with a funny twinkle in his eye, and his sides fairly shook.

"Why, hello! Whisker dear, I am *so* glad to see you," said Merrie brightly; then she noticed how he was laughing and looking as

though he had such a fine secret she could never guess it.

"You dear little bunch," she cried joyfully; "I knew Love would make you feel just right about this, as He has me, and I am sure I *never* saw you look so wise and saucy before."

She bent forward and put out her hand coaxingly, but Whisker gave a quick leap up the steps and took the toe of her small shoe lightly between his little teeth, as if to say—

"Che-koo, Che-koo, Che-koo!

You and I know a thing or two!" and with a grand flourish, disappeared as suddenly as he had come.

A day or two later Mrs. Preiss said: "I guess Whisker is trying to carry off the chickens now; I've seen him running up the pole from the chicken house to the barn two or three times."

"He hadn't a 'trunk' with him, had he?" asked Merrie.

"No, I didn't see any."

* * * *

Just one week from the day the nuts had been hidden, Mr. Preiss went to the barn for a tool.

He unlocked the door, went in and found his tool, then thought, "I guess I will take a look at my butternuts."

He tramped carelessly up the stairs and across the great loft to the butternut room and pushed the door far open to get a good view.

"Solomon Levi!" he gasped, all out of breath.

Would wonders never cease?

There was not a nut to be seen!!

The astonished man looked all around; there seemed to be no opening where a squirrel

could get it, and no place where the nuts could be hidden; he looked into and behind everything in the barn and the result was—he confessed himself beaten.

Into the house marched the man who could be outdone by a squirrel, and said in a tone half amused and half indignant, "Well, Merrie, I've just been into the barn and there isn't a nut there—he got them after all!"

"Hip, hip hurrah!" cried the little girl, hopping joyfully up and down, "I'm glad of it! I'm glad of it! They belonged to him, anyway!"

"Well, I'll find those nuts if I hunt a week," said the man crossly.

"You will *never* touch those nuts again, Mr. Preiss, because *I* won't *let* you," exclaimed Merrie fiercely.

Whether he was frightened or not I cannot say, but this is sure—*no one ever found the butternuts.*

CHAPTER V.

BUT how about Whisker?

He had seen where the nuts were put, and my!—it isn't any trouble for a squirrel to get into a barn.

He ran up the pole from the chicken house and squeezing through a broken window, scampered up stairs and there beheld his treasures.

He tore round and round the place in a perfect frenzy of delight, chattering and laughing to split his coat; it was a wonder he was not heard in the house.

Then he began to look around.

This was a very large barn and close underneath the roof Whisker found great broad beams, quite large enough to hold his store of nuts.

Now can you imagine how he chuckled as he went to work?

This time he had not far to go and simply flew down the beams for a nut, then back again, scurrying up with noiseless feet that hardly touched the road over which he went, and his bright little eyes—my stars!—how they twinkled and shone, to think after all he was getting ahead of that big robber-man.

He was so interested in his work he scarcely stopped to eat, and as for being tired—why, he never even thought of such a thing.

The little fleecy clouds that floated over the barn, beneath the blue sky, would as soon have thought of being tired as Whisker.

So, by and by, the nuts were carefully stowed away, and you should have seen them!

Whisker knew that it was easiest and best to put each one in its right place, and in all his haste he had not failed to lay them in the most perfect order.

How you would have laughed to see Whisker when Mr. Preiss went to the barn.

He stretched his little body out perfectly flat on the beam, and just popped his twitching little nose and shining eyes over the edge, so he could watch all the big robber-man did; and when the man, giving a hopeless look at the roof so far above him, saw what looked like two little chinks where the light came through, I am sure he was looking at Whisker's shining eyes, for the squirrel never even winked for fear of missing some of the fun.

"He laughs best who laughs last," thought Whisker with a grin.

Our little friend was safe and happy this time, because Love had told him where to go, and we shall see how Love was making him think of others.

* * * *

About a mile away was a great hollow apple tree, and this was called the "Horse-

shoe tree," because years ago when it was small, a horseshoe had been hung in the main crotch; as the tree grew tall and large, the thick bark had entirely surrounded one-half of the horseshoe, while the other half hung from the trunk like a handle; it looked as though the iron had really grown from the wood.

Mr. and Mrs. Squirrel with one little son had taken this tree for their winter palace, and just imagine what a stack of nuts and acorns *three* squirrels would put away!

This hollow, forsaken old "Horseshoe tree" certainly seemed just the place for them, and they were all ready for snow or blow "as snug as a bug in a rug."

Now we would be glad to know that no one troubled them in their cozy home, but you see they made the same mistake Whisker did at first; they thought only of their



"THE HORSESHOE TREE"

own comfort and pleasure, and so wise Love had much to teach them.

Soon after they were cozily settled for the winter, the same boys who had chased Whisker went romping past the old tree; one of them ran shouting and thrust his head into its hollow heart, and poor Mr. Squirrel heard him say:

"By jingo, boys! I'll bet there are two bushels of nuts here."

Then there was a great rush to the tree and all the boys had to look and admire.

Do you think they remembered these were the rightful property of the squirrels?

I am sorry to say, they never thought of it, but came the next day with bags and took them all away.

Mr. and Mrs. Squirrel saw the boys carrying off the bags and they actually turned pale, though unless you had a squirrel's eye, you could not see it.

The little son began to cry and the father to rage, but the mother squirrel tried to comfort them by saying hopefully:

"Well, I really don't know what we shall do, but Love has taken care of us so far, and I am sure He will fix it some way; we have not meant to wrong anyone, and surely Love will not leave us to starve."

Just then a cheerful voice cried:

"Che-koo, Che-koo, Che-koo,

I could laugh myself in two!"
and in darted Whisker.

He had always seemed to them a little proud and unfriendly, and they had never cared to play with him, but now seeing all the trouble they were in, Whisker told them of his great store of nuts, saying cheerfully: "I do believe Love sent me here just now to ask you to share my good things. I shall be so happy if you will come and live with me and help me eat the nuts—will you?"

Do you think this hearty invitation was accepted?

Well, children, you should have seen what followed!!

They all joined hands and danced joyfully around on their hind feet, with such a lot of bobbings and twitchings, and snappings, and whiskings, and joyous chitter-chatter, as was never seen or heard before I verily believe.

Then all the funny, furry ring cheerily joined their little visitor in his merry song:

“Chee-koo, Che-koo, Chekoo—

I could laugh myself in two,

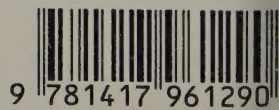
Up in the barn we'll have a regular spree,

We'll like it lots better than this old tree.”

* * * *

Dear little Whisker had learned the great lesson of his life—unselfishness—and at last, happy Love led them all four to their snug home in the barn.

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